(b) the steps taken to enhance indigenous content in the defence system;

(c) whether any stipulation has been made in the area of defence technology between DRDO, the services, academy, R&D establishments and industry for development; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) A 10-year national mission has been launched for enhancing self-reliance in Defence systems with a goal of progressively reducing the import of Defence Systems to 30% of annual defence acquisitions by the year 2005. For this, a 3 pronged strategy has been adopted covering indigenisation of spares for the imported systems, upgradation of the Defence systems held by the Services and progressive induction of increased number of indigenously developed Defence systems and equipment.

(b) Large variety of materials, components and sub-systems have been developed indigenously for use in Defence systems.

(c) and (d) As a policy, major R&D programmes of DRDO are executed by making optimal use of expertise and infrastructure available in various sectors which include the academic institutions, R&D establishments and industry in private and public sector. Three research boards viz. Aeronautical Research and Development Board, Naval Research Board and Armament Research Board have been approved with funding to promote research in the critical technologies. During the execution of the programmes very close interaction is maintained with user services, who also participate in project reviews and meetings of monitoring bodies and management boards.

[Translation]

Supply of LPG through Private Companies

780. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of private companies engaged in the supply of LPG to consumers;

(b) whether these companies are functioning satisfactorily;

(c) if not, the number of companies against whom the complaints of malpractices have been received; and

(d) the action being taken by the Government against them?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) As per the provision of the LPG Control Order 1993, private entrepreneurs import and market LPG at market determined price, under their own terms. Private parties are not required to obtain any licence from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for undertaking activities under the scheme. They are, however, required to obtain approvals/clearance under the relevant Acts and Rules regarding safety, pollution control, etc., as applicable. The private parties are also now required to get themselves rated from one of the approved rating agencies. So far 115 parties have obtained rating for supply of LPG to consumers under parallel marketing system. Cumulatively upto 30.6.1997, 18 parties have imported 236.8 TMT of LPG.

Some complaints were received against the parallel marketeers about non-refund of security deposit collected from the dealers/distributors, non-release of LPG connections, irregular supply of LPG refills, closure of operations, etc. The same were got investigated through the vigilance Cell of the Oil Coordination Committee (OCC) and the complainants were asked to take up the matter with Consumer Councils/MRTP Commission/Police etc. Some cases against the concerned parallel marketeers were also referred to the respective State Police Department for necessary action under the relevant law.

[English]

Marks in Hindi

781. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the percentage of marks in Hindi in CBSE examinations this year is too low in comparison to other subjects;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor, and

(c) the corrective measures proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) As per information furnished by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), there has been no comparative decline in the marks obtained by the candidates in the subject of Hindi in relation to those obtained in other subjects in the examinations conducted by the Board in 1997.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.